



August Brings Consumer-Friendly Changes to Wisconsin's Do Not Call Program

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MADISON – Consumers may not notice the difference right away, but big changes are just around the bend for Wisconsin's Do Not Call program.

Beginning August 1, Wisconsin consumers will no longer be required to register their numbers every two years to receive protection under state law from unwanted telemarketing calls and text messages, and new registrations will be active the following day rather than the next quarter.

"The changes to the state's Do Not Call law will benefit consumers," said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. "Consumers can sign up once and not have to worry about whether their registrations will lapse or whether there will be a three-month delay before they are protected under the program."

Changes in the state's Do Not Call law will make phone numbers on the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry permanent by moving the registration process to the Federal Trade Commission's nationwide list. Phone numbers on the previous Wisconsin list will automatically be transferred to the federal list. If a Wisconsin consumer has previously registered their number to the federal list, they do not need to re-register for protection under the new law.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will continue to enforce the state's Do Not Call laws, protecting Wisconsin residents registered on the federal list.

The following changes to Wisconsin's Do Not Call law are effective next month:

- Wisconsin residents no longer have to sign up every two years. Sign up once and you are done, as long as you have that number.
- Wisconsin consumers can register their residential landline, cell or VoIP numbers online at <http://nocall.wisconsin.gov> or by placing a call from the phone they wish to register to 1-888-382-1222 (TTY: 1-866-290-4236).
- To verify that your number is registered, call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY: 1-866-290-4236) from the phone you want to verify or visit <https://www.donotcall.gov/confirm/conf.aspx>.
- After you register, your phone number will show up on the registry by the next day. Telemarketers covered by the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry have up to 31 days from the date you register to stop calling you.

If you receive a call from a telemarketer after 31 days, file a complaint on the DATCP website (<http://datcp.wi.gov>) or call DATCP's Consumer Information Hotline at 1-800-422-7128. Please provide as much information as you can, including the name of the telemarketing company, the location from which they are calling, the name of the person calling, the phone number they used to call you and the product or service they called to sell.

If you answer the phone and hear a recorded message instead of a live person, it's a robocall. You may have received robocalls about candidates running for office or from charities asking



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for donations. These robocalls are allowed under the law. But if the recording is a sales message and you have not given your permission to get calls from the company on the other end, the call is illegal and the pitch is most likely a scam.

“It’s relatively cheap and easy for a criminal to call you from anywhere in the world,” said Chalmers. “Don’t send money in response to a robocall that violates state and federal law, because it’s most likely a fraudulent pitch as well.”

If you receive an illegal robocall:

- Hang up the phone. Do not press a key to speak to a live operator or to get your number removed from their list. If you respond by pressing any number, it will likely lead to more robocalls.
- Consider contacting your phone provider and asking them to block the number. Some providers may charge for that service. Remember that telemarketers change caller ID information easily and often, so it might not be worth paying a fee to block a number that may change.
- Review smartphone features that allow you to block or redirect calls, or consider a third-party app that identifies and blocks robocalls.
- Report the violation to DATCP online or call 1-800-422-7128 to request a complaint form by mail.

For more information on the Wisconsin Do Not Call program, visit <http://nocall.wisconsin.gov> or call the Consumer Information Hotline.

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